

PENCA DESIGN GROUP Ltd

Patty Penca, a creative director of a small full-service advertising firm, started PENCA DESIGN



GROUP Ltd in 2008. Previously she had worked for Marcus Advertising, Graphic Sense Studio, Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live. She decided working for herself from a studio in her home was a better fit for her lifestyle and goals. Now almost three years later, her one-woman part-time business has grown to a full-time design firm with two contract employees, writer, illustrators and web designers. Ms. Penca has created a profitable business from old fashion cold calling, shaking hands, social media strategy and word of mouth.

Patty came to the Small Business Development Center through a recommendation from the Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce. She needed some advice and assistance in the best ways of dealing with her business growth. She first met with counselor Cathy Walsh to discuss her growing pains and the possible need of moving out of her home studio to make room for staff to assist her. After discussing the different options, Ms. Penca decided to stay in her home studio and look for staff that would feel comfortable working in a home environment. Ms. Walsh convinced her to hire an administrative assistant, so she made her good friend Tracey Schveder part of her team.



During Patty's second year, issues on taxing and licensing became a challenge. She again called the Small Business Development Center and this time met with counselor Jim Gray, who gave her the advice she needed to meet those challenges. He also recommended she obtain DBE and EDGE certifications to help generate more business, which she has done. By going after these certifications, she was recently selected as one of the vendors to bid on a large project, something she would not have been able to do without Jim's advice. Patty said, "Jim helped me develop a clear and concise business plan, and solved my staffing and tax issues. The seminar he led earlier in the year and our one-on-one meeting made a real impact on my company's success."

PENCA DESIGN GROUP Ltd also was placed in the Center's e-mailing list to receive information on news, seminars and events geared for small businesses. She has attended numerous seminars and finds the trainings to be extremely helpful and recommends them to other business owners. She has even generated business by networking with the other business owners while attending the seminars. According to Ms. Penca, "The Small Business Development Center counselors have always been there for me, and their training seminars have been worth their weight in gold."

Thanks to Ms. Penca's staffing growth, she has been able to expand her design firm. She originally started with print and web design, but now she is assisting clients in designing and updating blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. In fact, her business in the social media market has increased to 50 percent of all her projects, and she is expecting this trend to continue.

Her advice to other entrepreneurs is simple, "NEVER GIVE UP!" Ms. Penca adds, "I have failed, failed and failed again. Just get back up off the floor to make it work." She also feels having a strong desire to do what you do is crucial. "You have to have it inside, and having a little help along the way can't hurt."